

INSTRUCTIONS
FOR
Children,
IN
VERSE.

By THOMAS GILLS, the
Blind Man of St. Edmunds Bury in
Suffolk.

London : Printed in the Year, 1707.



TO THE
Charitable Buyer.

'T Was from another Hand I took
The Subject of this little Book ;

For I my self am no Divine,
The Verse or Rhime is only mine.
My Stile is low, so should it be,
To suit a Child's Capacity ;
And my Condition is as low,
Poor, Blind and Lame, and being so,
I can no better Way descry
Than this to get a Penny by.

To the Charitable Buyer.

Then pray dislike not what I do,
To help my self and others too:
And if you Buy this Book of me,
You do Two Acts of Charity ;
To Children good Advice you give,
And grant me wherewithal to Live.

I N-

W
Bu
Q.
4

INSTRUCTIONS
FOR
CHILDREN,
IN
VERSE.

Duty to God, and first of Prayer.

Q. **F**rom whence, dear Child, does all that's Good proceed?

Ans. All Good from God Almighty comes indeed ;
We can no Gift, nor Grace, nor Blessing have,
But what we from his Goodness must receive.

Q. And how should we God's Blessings seek to gain ?

A. By Prayer we must those Gifts of God obtain.

7
A 3

R. Well,

Q. Well, what is Prayer? **A.** It is a lifting up
Our Minds to God, in whom we place our Hope.

Q. Where ought our Heart and Thoughts to be in Prayer?

A. On God in Heaven, not wandring here and there.

Q. But what if Idle Thoughts come when you pray?

A. Then I must strive to put such Thoughts away,
And turn my Heart and Mind to God again,
Because all other Thoughts are Evil then.

Q. From whence comes Worldly Thoughts in Time of Prayer?

A. Such Thoughts from our Corrupted Nature are;
Or from the Devil's Spight, he striving thus,
In this Good Work of Prayer to hinder us.
And if on Purpose, or for want of Care,
I think of vain Things, not of God in Prayer,
Then I offend my God by such an Evil,
And please my greatest Enemy, the Devil.

Q. And can you by such Prayer hope to obtain
God's Blessings? **A.** No, indeed, such Prayer is vain,
For I thereby provoke God not to grant
Those Blessings, Gifts and Graces, which I want.

Q. Since then vain Thoughts in Prayer cause so much Ill,
Will you whene'er you pray endeavour still
To think on God? **A.** Yes, by his Grace I will.

Q. How often, Child? And when are you to pray?

A. I ought to say my Prayers twice every Day;
First in the Morning when I rise, and so
Again at Night before to Bed I go.

Q. Why when you Rise must you your Prayers say?

A. To beg that God would help me all that Day
In all I do, and keep me from all Sin,
And from all Danger, lest I fall therein.

Q. Why must you say your Prayers again at Night?

A. To give God Thanks, (as 'tis most Just and Right,)
For that Day's Benefits bestow'd on me,
And then to beg of him that I may be
Preserv'd that Night from all its Dangers free.

Q. But ought you not at other Times to pray,
Besides at Night and Morning every Day?

A. Yeh

A. Yes, oftner if my Parents order it,
In this I am to do what they think fit.

Q. Should you to say your Prayers go willingly?

A. Although sometimes against my Will it be

I must go readily, because I know

It is the Will of God I should do so :

And since God is my Father, 'tis but just

I shou'd obey his Will, and so I must :

Besides, it is for my own Good to pray

That God would help and save me every Day ;

And sure I gladly ought to do the Thing

That so much Profit to my self does bring.

Q. Well then, when you are bid to go and say

Your Prayers, it is a Fault to make delay,

Although you be unwilling, or at play.

But tell me now, Good Child, if you omit,

Or quite neglect your Prayers, what Fault is it?

A. This I believe a greater Fault must be

Than that before ; pray make it plain to me.

Q. Mark then, suppose some Thief should steal from you

Your Vittuals, or your Cloaths, what would you do?

A. Indeed I should be vext to be so serv'd,

Because without those Things I should be starv'd.

Q. And don't you want God's Grace and Help d'ye think

As much as you want Cloaths, or Meat, and Drink?

A. Yes, I want Grace as much, I must not doubt it,

Because I cannot save my Soul without it,

Nor do the least good Work, nor go about it.

Q. Then do you see how much to Blame you are

If you neglect, or once omit your Prayer?

A. Yes, such Neglect would hinder me indeed

Of God Almighty's Grace, which most I need,

And I in this should more my own Foe be,

Than he that steals my Cloaths or Food from me

He would but rob my Body if he stole,

But by Neglect of Prayer I rob my Soul.

Q. What manner do you think you ought to pray in?

A. I ought to Kneel while I my Prayers am saying ;

On both my Knees, (for one will not suffice)
 And towards Heaven lift up my Hands and Eyes;
 I must Kneel upright too, not lean or loll
 Against a Stool, or Chair, or Bed, or Wall;
 Nor must I Laugh, or Look another Way,
 Nor with my Toys, or with my Fingers play,
 Nor stop to speak to others while I pray.

Q. Why may you neither Lean, Laugh, Gaze or Play,
 Or speak to others when your Prayers you say?

A. Because such Disrespect would ill become
 The Presence of Almighty God, to whom
 I speak in Prayer, and then it would displease
 His Majesty, who all my Actions sees.

I must pronounce my Words distinctly too,
 Nor huddle o'er my Prayers as some Folks do:
 For should I speak in that quick huddling sort
 To either Parent, they would beat me for't;
 Nay, if I spoke to any Body so,
 I should much want of Wit or Manners show;
 Then sure it must be great Indecency
 To speak so fast to Infinite Majesty,
 And God would therefore be displeas'd with me;
 And so instead of Blessings which I crave,
 Severe Chastisement I deserve to have.

Q. Well said, Good Child, all this is very true,
 Then as you know you ought, be sure to do.

Of Respect to the Name of God.

AND now concerning God Almighty's Name,
 Say in what Manner you should use the same:

A. The Name of God I never ought to mention
 But with due Reverence, and with good Intention;
 That is, in Praying to, or Praising him,
 Or when his Honour or our Good may seem

To need its being nam'd: For 'tis not fit
 In common idle Talk to mention it;
 Nor as a By-word, nor in heedless Fashion,
 Nor in my foolish Wond'rings, or my Passion,
 Nor yet in any trifling vain Occasion:
 Because in One Commandment it is plain,
 Thou shalt not take the Name of God in vain;
 For him the Lord God will not Guileless hold,
 That with his Holy Name will be so bold:
 Then certainly the Law of God we break,
 When we his Name unprofitably speak.

}

Q. And yet some People counted Good no doubt,
 You hear for every trifling Cause cry out,
 And often say, O Jesus! or O God!

A. Yes, this I hear, and think 'tis very odd
 That such as they should be so much to blame,
 And learn us little Ones to do the same;
 For what ill Words we hear old Folks repeat,
 We Children are too apt to imitate.

And thus God's Name is with Contempt abus'd,
 Which in a Holy Manner shou'd be us'd.

Q. What do you think of those that Curse and Swear?

A. I think those People very wicked are,
 And in such Company I must not stay,
 Nor with such naughty Children Talk or Play,
 For fear lest I should learn to do like them,
 And that I may not hear them thus Blaspheme,
 And wickedly prophane God's Holy Name.

}

Of Keeping the Lord's Day.

Q. **T**IS very well spoke, Child, now tell me, pray,
 How you are bound to keep the Sabbath-Day?

A. That Day, ordain'd by God's Commandment,
 In Holy Exercises should be spent;

On

On *Sunday* therefore I more Prayers must say,
 And oftner read than on another Day
 In Godly Books; for then I must not look
 In any Ballad, or a Story Book:
 To Publick Prayers likewise I ought to go,
 And there devout Respect and Reverence show;
 I must not Sleep, Gaze, Laugh or Babble there,
 But with the Congregation join in Prayer;
 And I must learn my Catechism by Heart,
 And every Lord's Day say thereof some Part,
 That I may know well what my Duty is,
 And how to get to Everlasting Bliss.
 Q. And will you, Child, be sure to do all this?
 A. Indeed I fear if I am let alone,
 I love my Play so dearly, I must own
 Of all these Things but little will be done;
 And therefore those who have the Charge of me,
 My Parents, or my Friends, must careful be
 To make me do my Duty punctually;
 And what may make me Good they often ought
 To teach, or send me where I may be taught:
 For if these Things they take no Care to do,
 And I prove Wicked, they are Guilty too;
 Because my Parents know, or should know, what
 Is most for my own Good if I do not.

Duty to Parents.

- Q. **W**HAT Duty to your Parents do you owe?
 A. I must Obey and Honour them I know,
 For God himself commands I should do so.
 Q. How must this Honour, Child, be shewn by you?
 A. In my Behaviour, Words and Actions too?

I ought

I ought to bow to them with Reverence,
 When in their Sight I come or go from thence;
 Before them Still and Modest I must be,
 And always speak to them respectfully;
 And when they speak to me mind what they say,
 And their Commands in every thing obey;
 For if to them Obedience I deny,
 I disobey Almighty God thereby;
 And what my Parents bid me I must do,
 Not only in their Sight, but Absence too;
 Or else by cheating them I give Offence
 To God, who sees my Disobedience.

Q. But what if Servants sometimes speak to you
 To do that Duty you forget to do?

A. I ought to thank them, and obey them too.

Q. What if sometimes your Parents order you
 To do a Thing you have no Mind to do?

A. Yet I must Chearfully, and Forthwith do't,
 And not Repine, nor Grumble, nor Dispute;
 Nor must I Stubborn, Mute and Sullen be
 When they Correct, Command, or Question me?

For in the Law of *Moses* there is One,
 To Stone a Stubborn and Rebellious Son.

Q. What if your Parents will not suffer you
 To do some Things you have a Mind to do,
 And what you fain would have deny you too?

A. I must submit then, and contented be,
 For they know best what is most fit for me:
 Besides, it would on me much Mischief bring
 If I should have my Will in every Thing;
 For my Desires would still be multiply'd,
 And I shou'd ne'er endure to be deny'd;
 Whereas good Christians whilst they live must die
 To their own Wills, and oft themselves deny;
 Now if I do not practice this whilst Young,
 Can I who had my own Will all along
 Deny it when my Passions grow more strong?

Since

Q. Since humouring you is hurtful you confess,
May you then love your Parents e'er the less
For their correcting you when you transgress? }

A. No, certainly, if fair Means prove in vain
To make me Good, I must be whipp'd, that's plain;
And tho' such beating seems unkind, 'tis true,
'Tis what my Parents are oblig'd to do:

For to this Purpose says the Word of God,
Correct thy Child, and beat him with the Rod.
But now if they with indiscreet Affection,
When I deserve it give me no Correction,
By such Mischievous Fondness Time may show
They ruin'd me, and caus'd themselves much Woe.

Q. Well then, dear Child, since all this you allow
In some Particulars, pray tell me now
Wherein your Humour must be contradicted?

And when you think you ought to be corrected?

A. Why then if I love Idleness and Play,
And will not Learn to Work, nor Read, nor Pray,
Or if I Stamp, or Cry, or take it Ill,
And Fret because I cannot have my Will;
Or if I be addicted to tell Lies,
Speak Naughty Words, or call ill Names likewise;
If I be Dainty, and refuse to Eat
Without my Sawce, or choicest Bits of Meat;
Or if through Pride I Envy and Repine
At others better cloath'd, and dress'd more fine,
Or those Despise whose Cloaths are worse than mine; }
If I be Peevish, Quarrellsome, or Loud,
Inquisitive, Affected, Vain, or Proud;
In any one of these ill Inclinations,
And such like Humours, Faults, and Naughty Passions,
My careful Parents never should neglect me,
But contradict my Humour, and correct me;
For whilst these Humours I in others see,
I find how odious they would look in me,
And how mischievous their Effects would be. }

And

And as I love my Parents at my Heart;
 I wish that they so well would do their Part
 To bring me up, that this their Good Endeavour
 May make me Love and Honour them for ever.

Duty to Relations and others.

Q. **W**ELL said; now tell me, must you love your Bro-
 (thers,

Your Sisters, Kinsfolks, Playfellows, and others?

A. Yes, truly, I am bound to do no less,

Q. And how must you this Love to them express?

A. By granting their Requests, by being Kind,
 And never doing what may vex their Mind;

For Christ commands each one to Love his Brother,

To live in Peace, and bear with one another;

And therefore I must give ill Words to none;

Nor Quarrel, Hurt, or Fight with any one;

Nor take from them by Force what is their own.

And if they will not do what I desire,

Nor give me any thing that I require;

Or if they provoke or injure me,

I must have Patience, and contented be;

For God will have me no Revenge to seek,

And Christ has said, That blessed are the Meek.

Q. May you Torment, or Maim, or Hurt Dumb Creatures?

A. No, they that do have Cruel or Ill Natures.

Of Stealing.

Q. That's true; pray may you Steal from any one?
Or keep a Thing by Force that's not your own?

A. No, I must never Steal, nor do so Ill,
To keep a Thing against the Owner's Will.

Q. But if at any time you chance to spy
Where Money, Fruit, or Sweet-meats open lye,
Or any fine or pretty Things that please you,
May you not take some when no Body sees you?

A. Perhaps I may be tempted then, 'tis true,
But since 'tis Theft 'tis what I must not do;
For if I play the Thief I can't conceal
The Fact from God, who says, Thou shalt not Steal.
His Holy Eyes do all my Actions see,
And he can make it known, and punish me.

Q. May you Remove, Destroy, Break, Kill or Wrong,
Whatever to your Neighbour does belong?

A. Such Things I must not Break, Spoil, Hurt or Kill,
For tho' it be not Stealing, 'tis as Ill.

Of Lying.

Q. MAY you belie your Sister or your Brother?
Or any Body else? Or may you smoothen
Your Faults by Lies, or lay it on another?

A. No, if at any time I tell a Lie
To hide my Fault, that Fault grows Two thereby;
And if I falsely charge the Innocent,
I sin by breaking that Commandment,
Wherein his Pleasure God does thus declare,
Against thy Neighbour no False Witness bear:

And

And I had better beaten be, or chidden,
Than do what God Almighty has forbidden;
Besides, I may escape when I transgress
If I be sorry, and the Truth confess.

Q. May you forge Lies, or false Relations make
Of what you see, or hear, or others speak?

A. Liars by all Good People are abhorr'd,
And Lying Lips are odious to the Lord;
A Liar is as hateful as a Thief,
And when he speaks the Truth gets no Belief;
And therefore I must carefully endeavour
To speak the Truth on all Accounts whatever.

Duty to Old People.

Q. **T**hat's very well, be sure Dear Child do so:
And now for what Respect you are to show
To Aged People, tell me if you know?

A. I ought to reverence Old Age, 'tis true,
Almighty God will have me so to do,
And therefore when Old People pass by me,
I ought to Bow, or make a Courtesie.

Q. But what if you should Mock, or Scoff at them?

A. Such Wickedness the Scripture does condemn.
We read of many Children torn by Bears,
Because they mock'd the Prophet bald with Years.

Q. And don't you think 'tis likewise very bad
To mock at Folks Deform'd, or Fools, or Mad?

A. 'Tis ill to scoff at Peoples Misery,
And if I do so God may angry be,
And with the like Affliction punish me;
I ought to have Compassion on their Woe,
And give God Thanks because I am not so.

Duty

Duty to Poor People.

Q. **Y**OU say well, Child, now tell me One Thing more
Concerning your Behaviour to the Poor ?

A. The Poor I must relieve if I be able,
With Money, or with something from the Table ;
For what I give the Poor I lend the Lord ;
But if I can no other Alms afford,
I'll pray for them, and pity their Distress,
And always speak to them with Tenderness ;
For whosoever does the Poor contemn,
His Maker does reproach in scorning them.

Conclusion.

GOD grant me Grace that I may take due Pains
To practice what this little Book contains ;
To which, if I apply my best Endeavour,
I shall be Happy here, and Bless'd for ever.

F I N I S